



Eider enjoyed meeting our guests

2024 VIP Day Round Up

This September we were thrilled to host our fourth annual VIP Day, with 70 guests in attendance over the course of three dates. The weather was kind to some and not to others, but all-in-all our guests thoroughly enjoyed their day.

Introduction

CEO Jo Snell kicked things off by welcoming our guests and thanking them for their continued support. Jo discussed the 10-Year Strategic Plan, the recent restructure, and our next steps to

ensure the charity's future for another 50 years.

Emma Carter, Deputy CEO, then spoke about our work within the local community, how we assist local authorities such as Fire & Rescue and Police and the importance of building positive relationships with these groups.

Day in the Life of a Field Officer

The first presentation of the day was led by Field Officer Kate Wright, who gave supporters a taste of what her job entails and the trials

and tribulations that come with it. Kate explained how equine welfare concerns are reported, how she handles those cases and how an equine might end up in the care of Bransby Horses.

Guests were introduced to Spitfire, a young cob who arrived in June after he kept escaping from his tether. Spitfire was rescued from a garden of a children's home, and whilst he was having a great time there playing with the swings and ruining the flower beds, it wasn't a suitable living space for a pony.



Snow Bunting enjoyed a fuss



Veterinary Advisor, Jeremy Kemp-Symonds delivered a presentation on laminitis

With no traceable owner, Spitfire was soon under our care and starting his new life at Bransby Horses. But in other cases, field officers like Kate often communicate with owners to ensure equines are properly cared for without a need for transfer of ownership.

Shetland pony Polly was an example of this. After her owner brought Polly into a British Horse Society Healthcare & Education clinic, members of staff soon realised how pregnant and ill she was. Veterinary care was quickly provided for the poorly pony and after discussing the ongoing level of care Polly would need with her owner, she was signed over to us. Polly spent the next two weeks in hospital before arriving at Bransby Horses, later giving birth to Pikachu, one of the smallest foals we'd ever seen.

Laminitis with Jeremy Kemp-Symonds

Our Veterinary Advisor, Jeremy

Kemp-Symonds delivered an in-depth presentation on laminitis, how the condition is caused, what it looks like and how it's treated. With laminitis affecting around one in 10 horses, it was an important topic to discuss with supporters.

Visitors enjoyed looking at a model replica of an equine's hoof, giving them a better insight into the way laminitis affects equines. They also viewed real X-rays of an equine suffering from this condition.

Meeting the Estates Team

Both groups then moved on to the next stage of the day, with group one heading over to the Peter Hunt Yard and group two being introduced to our wonderful Estates Team.

Estates Operations Manager Chris Foster led the presentation, explaining to supporters the mammoth task that is land

management at Bransby Horses, with 1,300 acres across both sites.

A range of equipment was out on display, including various grass harrows and soil samples that visitors were invited to feel for themselves.

To view all the photographs from the VIP Days please visit your exclusive Friends of Bransby Horses area of our website

Every year for this team is different and 2023 proved especially challenging. Due to the high temperatures, last year's grass growth was four times above average, making equine weight management even trickier. Not only this, but hundreds of acres of land were flooded in the October storms, all of which had to be recovered.

Chris emphasised the importance of making pastures perfect, something that positively effects an equine's health and keeps overall costs down.

The Peter Hunt Yard

Meanwhile, group one were enjoying a relaxing meet and greet



Emma Carter met some of our guests



Spitfire helped with a demonstration



Chamberlain has found his Perfect Partner through our rehoming scheme



Visitors looking at a model replica of an equine's hoof



Estates Operations Manager Chris Foster



Our guests met Eider

with equines on the Peter Hunt Yard, an area usually closed to the public. They were introduced to foals Beverley and Eider, who were playing up for the crowd, and interacted with ponies from the Welsh commons, some of whom were feral when they first arrived.

Visitors ambled around the yard, greeting ponies who popped their head over the stable door for a quick hello, before getting back to their hay nets (it was their lunchtime after all).

The Animal Reception Centre

Another area of our site that isn't open to the public is the Animal Reception Centre, known as the ARC. Every equine arriving on-site spends a minimum of eight weeks being assessed for diseases, medical and behavioural issues.

The next talk was led by Equine Welfare Assistant Olivia Waters, who spoke about the biosecurity measures this yard has in place, preventing the spread of infectious diseases. She explained that every equine has their own 'Biosecurity Kit Box' containing overalls, clinical gloves and foot covers, which get washed daily along with any tools (such as poo pickers).

The eight weeks an equine spends at this yard also allows team members to get to know them better, understand what kind of issues they have (if any) and what their next steps look like. Some equines will be put on an individual handling and training programme, which Olivia further explained.

She introduced clicker and target training, which encourages equines to associate their handlers with positive emotions rather than fearful ones. Guests attentively watched demonstration videos, showing how we build up an equine's trust through various



Spitfire showed his cheeky side to our guests



Four-legged friends are always welcome



Paul Williams, Estates Operations Manager (Barlings)



Mervyn was there to greet guests on the Peter Hunt Yard

techniques such as hook work, leg work and hand work. Olivia provided a great insight into this vital part of the charity, showing the amount of work that goes into rehabilitating every equine.

The Rehoming Process

We listened to your feedback from previous years and included a feature on our Perfect Partner scheme, led by an employee who is fostering a Bransby Horses equine herself. Equine Welfare Assistant Emma Gray shared her experience, emphasising the ease of the process and how much her fostered pony, Chamberlain, has changed her life.

She went through the process step by step, explaining what was expected of potential fosterers and what our rehoming team do to ensure every equine is matched with the right home. If you'd like to find out more about rehoming a Bransby Horses pony, visit BransbyHorses.co.uk/Perfect-Partner or call the Rehoming Team on 01427 788 464.

Track Systems and Spitfire's Grand Entrance

Our final talk of the day was focused on track systems used for equine weight management. Guests were taken outside to view a working track system, with team



The day ended with afternoon tea

members from the Main Yard explaining the benefits and how it's implemented.

Equine Welfare Assistant Laura Holmes told supporters how track systems were great for weight loss and encouraging movement for equines suffering from arthritis, but emphasised they didn't work for everyone. She explained the use of treat balls around the track, which encouraged natural foraging behaviours, making equines work for their food and providing them with enrichment.

Treat an equine with a brand-new treat ball from our Amazon Wishlist.



Team members also demonstrated the use of weigh bridges and measuring tapes, with Spitfire as

their glamorous assistant, showing supporters the various methods we use to manage an equine's weight. Spitfire was lapping up the attention and after the demonstration was over, he thoroughly enjoyed having a queue of people waiting to give him a fuss.

It was difficult to lure our guests away, but the promise of afternoon tea beckoned and soon they were all settled in the cafe to mark the end of a successful day. We loved welcoming a record number of supporters to our annual VIP Days, showing a side of Bransby Horses that not many get to see. The feedback we received was wonderful and we can't wait to start planning the 2025 event.

Our annual VIP Day allows us to say a huge in-person thank you to you for providing us with essential ongoing support. To every single one of you, we just can't thank you enough for everything you



Sponsorship Star, Nipper met our guests

Would you like to feedback on this year's VIP Days? Help us improve and scan the QR code to take our survey.

